THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE L.NARASIMHA REDDY

W.P.No.27285 of 2005

Date:23.12.2005

D.Sreenivasa Rao.

--------PETITIONER

The Regional Manager and others.

---------RESPONDENTS

ORDER:

The petitioner is employed as a Driver in APSRTC. He was issued a Charge Sheet, dated 31.03.2001, alleging that he caused an accident, while driving the bus on 23.02.2001, and that he was required to submit the explanation as to why necessary disciplinary action shall not be taken against him. It is stated that the petitioner submitted his explanation to the same. Thereafter, the third respondent passed an order, dated 23.08.2001, imposing the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year and further directed that it shall have the cumulative effect on the future increments. Aggrieved thereby, the petitioner filed an appeal before the appellate authority and the same was dismissed. Hence, this Writ Petition.

The only point urged by Sri Y.Subba Rao, the learned counsel for the petitioner, is that the 3rd respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year with cumulative effect without conducting departmental enquiry. He placed reliance upon the judgment of the Apex Court in ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL v. STATE OF PUNJAB*** and submits that stoppage of increment is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry.

Sri R.Manmadha Reddy, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the respondents, on the other hand, submits that the penalty imposed against the petitioner itself is minimal, if the lapse on his part is taken into account.

It is a matter of record that the 3rd respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year with cumulative effect, on the allegation that the petitioner caused an accident. Though a charge sheet was issued to the petitioner before the penalty was imposed, no departmental enquiry was conducted. I n ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL's case*** (supra), the Supreme Court held that stoppage of increments with cumulative effect is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry. In view of the same, the impugned order cannot be sustained.

In the ordinary course of things, the impugned order needs to be set aside, leaving it open to the 3rd respondent to pass fresh orders. To avoid further delay and complication in the mater, this Court is of the view that the impugned order can be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment without cumulative effect.

Hence, the writ petition is partly allowed, directing that the order, dated 23.08.2001, shall be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year without cumulative effect and that the petitioner shall not be entitled for any monetary benefits up to the date of this order. There shall be no order as to costs.

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23.12.2005

Jsu